AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

As indicated below, Applicant is amending Claims 1, 4, 20, 23 and 27. Claims 2, 3, 7–13, 15–17, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 29 and 30 remain as previously presented.

1. (Currently Amended) A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, comprising:

a plurality of backup cells each comprising:

a backup device executing a backup of data stored on at least one of a plurality of groups of network computing devices;

a manager component, communicatively coupled to the at least one backup device, controlling the backup of the data to the backup device; and

each of the plurality of backup cells communicatively coupled to at least one other backup cell among the plurality of backup cells, and each of the plurality of backup cells configurable to be controlled by [[a]] the manager component in another backup cell among the plurality of backup cells.

2. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 1, wherein the backup device is controllable from the manager component in another of the plurality of backup cells.

3. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 1, wherein the backup device is controllable from the manager component in another of the plurality of backup cells via the manager component in the same backup cell as the backup device.

4. (Currently Amended) A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, comprising:

a first backup cell comprising:

at least one backup device executing a backup of data stored on a first group of network computing devices;

a first manager component, the first manager component communicatively coupled to the at least one backup device[[,]] and controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device; and

a second backup cell communicatively coupled to the first backup cell, the second backup cell comprising:

a second manager component [[; and]], the second manager component directly controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device.

5.–6. (Canceled).

7. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 4, the network computing system comprising a first network computing device, wherein the first manager component is a software module executing on the first network computing device, and the second manager component is a software module executing on the second network computing device.

8. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 7, the network computing system further comprising a second network computing device, wherein the second manager component executes on the second network computing device.

9. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 7 wherein the second manager component executes on the first network computing device.

10. (Previously Presented) A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, comprising:

at least one backup device executing backup functions for data contained on a first group of network computing devices;

a first manager component executing on a first network computing device of the first group of network computing devices, the first manager component being communicatively coupled to the at least one backup device and controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device; and

a second manager component, communicatively coupled to the first network computing device, the second manager component directly controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device.

11. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 10 wherein the second manager component executes on the first network computing device.

12. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 10, the network computing system further comprising a second network computing device, wherein the second manager component on the first network computing device.

13. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 10, the network computing system further comprising a second group of network computing devices containing data, wherein the second manager component controls a backup of the data contained on the second group of network computing devices.

14. (Canceled).

15. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 10, wherein the backup device is controllable from the second manager component via the first manager component.

16. (Previously Presented) A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, comprising:

at least one backup device executing backup functions for data contained on a first group of network computing devices;

a first network computing device, communicatively coupled to the at least one backup device, controlling the backup of the data contained on the first group of network computing devices to the at least one backup device; and

a second network computing device, communicatively coupled to the first network computing device, the second network computing device directly controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device.

17. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 16, the network computing system further comprising a second group of network computing devices containing data, wherein the second network computing device controls a backup of the data contained on the second group of network computing devices.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 16, wherein the second network computing device controls the backup of the data to the at least one backup device via the first network computing device.

20. (Currently Amended) A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, comprising:

a plurality of backup cells comprising:

a backup device executing a backup of data stored on at least one of a plurality of network computing devices;

a manager component, residing on and configured to execute on any network computing device and communicatively coupled to at least one backup device, for controlling the backup of the data to the backup device; and

means for communicatively coupling a first backup cell to at least one other backup cell, whereby the first backup cell is capable of being controlled by [[a]] the manager component in the other backup cell.

21. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 20, comprising means for controlling the backup device in a first backup cell from the manager component in another of the plurality of backup cells.

22. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 20, comprising means for controlling the backup device in a first backup cell from the manager component in another of the plurality of backup cells via the manager component in the first backup cell.

23. (Currently Amended) A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, the backup and retrieval system comprising:

a plurality of backup cells comprising:

a backup device executing a backup of data stored on at least one of a plurality of network computing devices;

a media component, configured to reside and to execute on any network computing device including a first network computing device,

communicatively coupled to at least one backup device for controlling the backup of the data to the backup device;

a client component, configured to reside on and execute on any network computing device including a second network computing device and communicatively coupled to at least one media component, directing the media component to backup the data according to operational parameters established by the client component;

a manager component, configured to reside on and execute on any network computing device including a third network computing device and communicatively coupled to at least one client component, directing the client component to backup the data according to backup parameters of the backup cell established by the manager component; and

means for communicatively coupling each of the plurality of backup cells to at least one other of the plurality of backup cells, and each of the plurality of backup cells configurable to be controlled by [[a]] the manager component in another backup cell of the plurality of backup cells.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 20, comprising means for the manager component in another of the plurality of backup cells to control the client component.

26. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 20, comprising means for the manager component in another of the plurality of backup cells to control the client component via the manager component in the same backup cell as the client component.

27. (Currently Amended) A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, comprising:

a plurality of backup cells comprising:

a backup device executing a backup of data stored on at least one of a plurality of network computing devices;

a manager component, residing on and configured to run on any network computing device and communicatively coupled to at least one

backup device, for controlling the backup of the data to the backup device; and

means for communicatively coupling a first backup cell to at least one other backup cell, whereby the first backup cell is capable of being controlled by [[a]] the manager component in the other backup cell.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 27, comprising means for controlling the backup device in a first backup cell from the manager component in another of the plurality of backup cells.

30. (Previously Presented) The backup and retrieval system of claim 27, comprising means for controlling the backup device in a first backup cell from the manager component in another of the plurality of backup cells via the manager component in the first backup cell.